Comparable performance of exports and imports

890. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state the details of the comparable performance of export and imports during the current year in comparison with the same period for the last year and the action being taken to meet the export target for the year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Details of export and imports during April to June, 1995 the latest period for which trade data are available in the current year, and those for the corresponding period last year are as under:—

	April-June		
	US$ Million		% Growth
	1994	1995	
Exports	5613.59	7167.50	27.7
Imports	5811.53	7991.70	37.5

The export target for the year 1995-96 envisages around 18% to 20% growth in US Dollar terms over the exports valued at US$ 26223 million during 1994-95. Export promotion is a continuous process. Steps are taken to boost exports in consultation with the trade, industry and other concerned institutions. The Government is striving to make the environment of policy and procedures more export-friendly. Among the measures taken for export promotion, mention may be made about simplification of Export-Import Policy and Procedures, increasing export production, improving efficiency and competitiveness, focussing on quality improvement and technological upgradation, improvement in infrastructure and actively involving State Governments in export promotion. In the current year, an Annual Action Plan has been formulated which, interalia, covers commodity specific measures for export promotion.

Fixing of maximum retail price by manufacturers

891. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
DR. RANBIR SINGH:

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 'maximum retail price' printed on the packaged items is fixed arbitrarily by the manufacturers;

(b) if so, whether Government have reviewed the existing laws and whether there is any proposal to bring suitable amendments therein to safeguard the interests of the consumers; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) to (c) The manufacturer makes a declaration of maximum retail sale price in the form of "MRP..... inclusive of all taxes" on a package in accordance with the provisions of "the Standards of Weights & Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules; 1997". These rules are intended to safeguard the consumers interests to the extent that no retail dealer can charge a price higher than the printed MRP without attracting the penal provisions made under the rules. These rules are not intended to control or regulate the retail sale prices.

Scope of revamped public distribution system

892. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to revamp PDS scope launched in 1992 in tribal mountatinous and desert areas of the country "in a big way" as reported in the Indian Express dated 19th July, 1995;

(b) the states which will be the chief beneficiaries indicating the present availa-

Revamped Public Districution system (RPDS) from the present 1775 Blocks to all the 2446 Blocks covered under the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS).

(b) The proposed extension of RPDS in various States/UTs is shown in the statement (*See* below)

(c) Central Issue Prices for rice and wheat w.e.f. 1.2.1994 for RPDS areas are given below:

(Rs. per quintal)

Rice			Wheat
Common	Fine	Super-fine	
487	567	598	352

(d) No, Sir. The Central Government issues foodgrains to States/UTs for RPDS areas at uniform Central Issue Prices which are Rs. 50 per quintal less than the CIP for normal PDS areas. Central Government has advised State Governments/UT Administrations that the End Retail Prices (ERP) of foodgrains in these areas should not exceed the CIP by 25 paise per kg. The responsibility for fixing the ERP of PDS commodities is that of the State Governments and therefore, the ERP may very from State to State and even from region to region within a State due to variations in transportation costs, local levies/taxes etc. Such details are not maintained by the Central Government. There is no proposal to provide additional subsidy to bility of the scheme, block-wise, particularly in Rajasthan and Orissa;

(c) what are the issue prices of rice, wheat and other essential commodities to the states under the RPDS; and

(d) whether rates differ from state to state; if so, the details thereof and whether any additional subsidy is likely to be provided to states like Rajasthan and Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTIONS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Government is considering a proposal to extend the any State/U.T. including Rajasthan and Orissa.

Statement

Statewise list of additional blocks identified for extension of RPDS

Sl. No.	State/UT	No. of Additional Blocks
1.	Andhra Pradesh	35
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	8
3.	Assam	73
4.	Bihar	110
5.	Gujarat	34
6.	Himachal Pradesh	12
7.	Jammu & Kashmir	23
8.	Karnataka	25
9.	Madhya Pradesh	74
10.	Maharashtra	57
11.	Meghalaya	2
12.	Orissa	32
13.	Rajasthan	50
14.	Tamil Nadu	33
15.	Uttar Pradesh	103
		671

People going abroad through agencies

893. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cases of luring people out of the country by some agencies is still in vogue and the people are still being cheated by those agents; and

(b) if so, how many cases have come to the notice of Government in the last twelve months and what action has been taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) Twenty four complaints against Recruiting Agents have been reported to the Government during the last twelve months (Ist August, 1994 to 31st July, 1995). Such complaints are enquired into with the help of the concerned police authorities, if required. Action to sus-